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THE PRESIDENCY

Crossfire

In the midst of the defense-battle, Dwight Eisenhower has weathered under some of the sharpest crossfire of personal attack since he stepped into the presidency. Congressional investigators prodded generals and admirals into admitting that they wanted more money than Ike's \$41 billion military budget allows. Democrats accused the President of gambling with the nation's security; Missouri's Senator Stuart Symington, a presidential hopeful, even threatened to publish top-secret U.S. intelligence estimates if the Administration denies that Soviet might has "increased considerably." (Grumped Ike to his staff: "We may have to take another look at what we give these people.") Columnist Joseph Alsop called the Eisenhower determination to preserve fiscal responsibility in Government an "obsession" and a "mania." Pundit Walter Lippmann, himself past 70, likened Ike to "a tired old man who has lost touch with the springs of our national vitality."

Imperturbably at midweek the President flew to Florida for a tour of the Cape Canaveral missile-test center. For 34 hours he was led through a forest of gantries for the liquid-fueled Atlas and Titan, the solid-fueled Polaris and Pershing. He praised the base's "minimum of extravagance and maximum of efficiency," said "I came back with a much better feeling than I had before I went down there."

Next day at his 130th press conference Eisenhower, his blue eyes snapping, fired back at the snipers. In his answers his toes could find many of the things for which they jeer Ike: sprawling syntaxes and turbulent tenses, and a tendency to state his decisions as gospel without citing the reasons behind them. But his friends could also easily detect Eisenhower's sense of purpose and unflagging concern for the nation's well-being. Items:

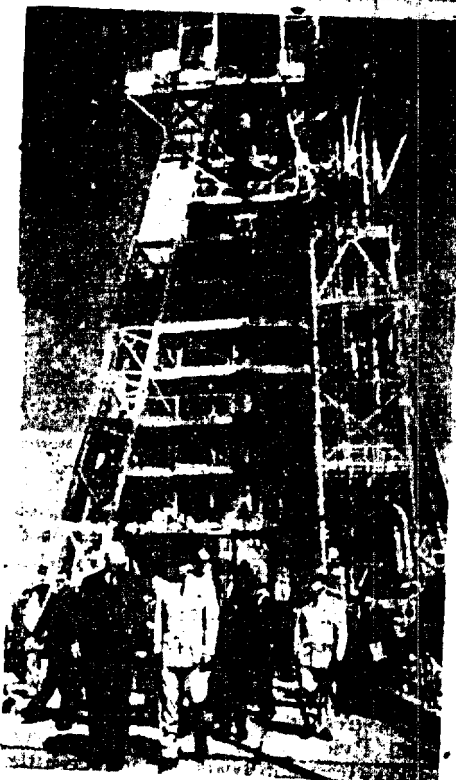
On His Decisions: "I have been in the military service a long time. I am obviously running for nothing. I want only my country to be strong, to be safe, and to have a feeling of confidence among its people so they can go about their business. In the decisions that I have to make, I have heard all the arguments, pro and con, and I have done the best I can, and I am doing it with one idea in mind only—America."

On His Critics: "I am trying to keep my statements outside the partisan field. We should be big enough not to let headlines, I think we should be big enough to put our heads together and see if we can get a real solution."

On His Budget Policy: "Now if any man, any kind of hysterical argument can prove that you can continue to get deeper and deeper into debt without finally paying a very great price for the nation's security, I'd like to hear it. They prove their case. Now that I know that any budget I've ever seen has been put together on the basis of being a

...about the needs of the...
 ...and...to put...
 ...group inducement, before...
 ...I don't believe in...
 ...of...
 ...the U.S. believe will be helpful, and...
 ...at the same time get this fiscal business...
 ...into such control that we can have prosperity in the future."

On His Role: "I hope that I am helping to establish a pattern for solving these problems in the manner of reasonable men, never giving away to the so-called ultra-liberal that has no other purpose than to give your money away for some pet theory of his own and, on the other



Edward Clark—Life
 EISENHOWER AT CANAVERAL
 Snoring for snipers.

hand, to repudiate reaction like you would the Devil and his works."

In the echo of the President's words, congressional Democrats were cranking up a new drive to boost the 1961 defense budget from \$41 billion to \$42 or even \$44 billion. To do that with impunity, they would first have to be sure of a mandate from the people. They do not seem to have it. So many Americans now enjoying the liberal dividends of a half-trillion-dollar economy, the vagaries of the defense debate seem remote and the danger of a Soviet attack even more remote. Last week the *Wall Street Journal* buttonholed 50 people across the land, reported that 60 percent of the military judgment of Dwight Eisenhower, mistrusted his generals as incurable pleaders for more for their own services. Well,